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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, June 2, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FIRE DANGERS IN FOREST CABINS." Information from the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

"It's about time to open up the cottage," says Dad to Mother, thinking of fishing tackle and camp togs these first days of June. "School will soon be out, and the youngsters will want to head straight for the forest." "And Dad, too," thinks Mother.

Doubtless a number of the dads and mothers who happen to be listening today are also thinking about summer vacation homes. Yours may be a log cabin in a National Forest, or a little cottage by the wooded shore of a lake, or a shack on the seashore, where the children have so much fun. How safe is your vacation place from fire? Whatever type of summer home you have, it represents an investment of several hundred dollars; you don't want to see it go up in smoke.

And there's another important consideration which all too few people think about. If a summer cottage or cabin is in a wooded area, it is potentially dangerous to the forest, because of its light construction, its distance from fire fighting apparatus, often the lack of water, and the kinds of things people do on vacation- cook with open fires or rickety stoves that wouldn't be tolerated at home, smoke carelessly, leave gasoline and kerosene about. Once started, a forest fire can do irreparable damage.

When you open up your vacation cabin, do you inspect it thoroughly from the fire safety standpoint? And repeat the inspection at regular intervals throughout the season? Do you provide water and fire fighting tools- some kind of fire extinguisher, a barrel or drum of water with buckets nearby, a box of sand, a shovel, axe, and rake?

Do you teach children and guests to take proper fire precautions whenever they are in the forest? The home owner has to be constantly on the alert for carelessness due to a holiday state of mind. Guests unused to the forest are often careless with their cigarette butts. They throw them off into brush or leaf cover without making sure that they are fully out.

I have received from the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture a little pamphlet giving suggestions for fire protection and prevention for summer homes in forested areas. I want to summarize these suggestions for you, because I think they are equally applicable to any home, summer or winter. They were drawn up by the National Fire Protection Association and the U. S. Forest Service, and may be had in printed form for ten cents from the Association, 60 Batterymarch Street, Boston, Mass.



6/2/38

In regard to the construction of the summer place, these authorities say: Locate buildings when possible between a stream and a road, on a lot that is away from other structures. Construct chimneys, flues and fireplaces according to approved specifications and provide spark arresters. Roofing should be fire resistant. Electrical wiring and fixtures of standard approved type; fuel oil, acetylene, or compressed gases installed in standard way.

Now about fire using equipment: Keep wood, gasoline and kerosene stoves in good repair. Provide stove boards and wall boards. See that the stovepipe is whole and securely joined and installed. Keep stove, lamps and lanterns well away from walls and draperies. Screen the fireplace. Put lamps on sturdy stands or tables.

Keep the woodbox free of papers and rubbish and away from the stove or fireplace. Never start a fire with kerosene or gasoline, or leave a fire unattended, even in a stove. Never try to burn large pieces of paper or cloth indoors. Don't put ashes in burnable containers. Dump them in a fireproof pit. Keep rugs away from the fireplace. Fill lanterns and lamps outdoors. Dispose carefully of smoking materials.

Proper storage of combustible and flammable material is very important. If gasoline, kerosene or oils are kept about the place store them in isolated, well-ventilated structures. Never store dynamite or caps on the premises. Keep matches in metal containers. Dispose immediately of oily rags, waste paper and rubbish generally.

To prevent fires starting outside the building, rake needles and leaves from the roof; burn rubbish in a fireproof incinerator. Never burn an open pile of rubbish or make a bonfire, even in safe weather. Have a fireproof pit for the disposal of ashes. Keep fire-fighting tools and equipment on hand. Clean up the premises continually, and trim off overhanging limbs around chimneys or incinerators.

For fire-fighting tools, in addition to the extinguisher, buckets and barrels already mentioned, and hand tools such as axe, shovel, and rake, a water system and garden hose may save your property when a small blaze starts. In many forest communities there is a local organization for fire and trespass protection, and in larger colonies there may be pumper equipment.

The authors of the pamphlet say: "Primitive conditions, which are one of the main attractions of summer homes, sometimes lead to absence of ordinary precaution and carefulness..... Cabins are of light construction, put up at low cost..... Furnishings and equipment are often those which have been discarded as unfit for use in town houses..... Once a fire gains headway total destruction usually results, with the added danger that flying brands may start a forest fire..... Even greater care is necessary, therefore, in this type of surroundings than in the city, although the opposite is the common tendency."

One last reminder, since the "glorious Fourth" is not far away. It is the universal rule in regulated forest areas that no fireworks be discharged. Not even a firecracker. Firecrackers, roman candles, and practically all other types smolder and are very likely to furnish the spark needed to start a fire. So make other and safer plans for celebrating Independence Day, and get the children to cooperate.

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